NEW PLAYS

"The Fighting Hope" Wins Out in the Eleventh Hour.

BY CHARLES DARNTON.

Once more we must give Mr. Belasco the decision. Although "The Fighting Hope" seemed very slim for an act or more at the Stuyvesant Theatre last night, it grew into one situation at least before the second curtain fell, and then, developing unexpected strength, finally won out in the eleventh hour by striking a genuinely human note.

The first act offered nothing but a series of tedious explanations that betrayed the amateurish hand of William J. Hurlbut, and it stretched the long arm of coincidence until every muscle ached. Even Burton Temple's home at Oceanview was in sight of the prison where Robert Granger was serving "time" for a crime which Temple was supposed to have committed. The simple geography of drama was arranged with a view to what might be said and thought when the leading characters happened to walk to the window. And Granger's wife, who came to this home of the President of the Gotham Trust Company in the guise of Miss Dale, secretary, wasn't altogether a stranger. The irritating old housekeeper welcomed her as a dear friend of other days. Temple, too, was sure he had seen her somewhere, while she recognized him as the ideal man of her office building past. This is indeed a small world when there are only five characters in a three-act play.

John W. Cope as Marshfield Craven.

And what is home without a thief in these stage days? We have only to recall Bernstein's parlor melodrama and the hard-up tale of a Harlem flat to realize what a thief is worth to the playwright. Mr. Hurlbut has added a prison cell, but he has been young-fashioned enough to put it out of sight, if not out of mind.

Just as the play seemed to be constructed from without, so Miss Blanche Bates's acting of the true wife and untruthful secretary was purely external for a large part of last evening. The fault, however, was not hers. As Miss Dale she was there to discover evidence of Granger's innocence and Temple's guilt, and as evidence of any sort was a long time in turning up, she could only wait and click out her emotions on the typewriter. At first she seemed little more than a stenographic copy of a heroine. Sympathetic though you were, you could scarcely share her heartfelt interest in her children. If it be true that children should be seen and not heard, it is equally true that a great deal too much was heard about them last night.

Your imagination soon tired of the children. It was a relief to forget the mother and study the secretary, who came to work in hipless brown satin, and moved about with a kimono walk that recalled "The Darling of the Gods." Meanwhile Miss Bates was acting against time. She, like the rest of us, had to wait for something to happen. The play was as slender as herself, but it was by no means so clear-cut, so high-strung. Miss Bates's face twitched with emotions that weren't ready for delivery. Doubts, fears, hopes were fighting within her. You saw her bite her lips to keep 'em down. And then you heard her call "Mister T-e-m-p-l-e" as coyly as "The Girl of the Golden West" might have done, and somehow or other the two-and-two of her characterization didn't make four. In other words, any big, simple expression was lost in a hundred and one fluttering, meaningless trivialities. But the moment of storm and stress was to come, and Miss Bates was to make it burn with a white heat.

Usually a Belasco heroine pounds a door when worst comes to worst, but this one pounded her husband. And Robert Granger deserved a beating if ever a stage cur did. Miss Bates saved her strength for this moment. Only a small part of it was exhausted when the woman found a letter in which her husband revealed the fact that it was he who had over-certified a check that brought about the failure of the Gotham Trust Company. Like the brash young woman in "The Lion and the Mouse," she had entered the employ of the rich man of influence to spy upon him. And after she knew he loved her the discovery came that he was innocent, and that her husband was guilty. The letter would clear away the cloud of accusation over Temple's head, and save him from prison. But it would put the everlasting brand on her husband, the father of her children. This last Miss Bates told by a broken cry in the throat that was more effective than her first heroics. And so the woman took from the safe the letter over which Temple was already hysterical with joy, and burned it.

Sardou would have struck fire with this clash of right and wrong, this woman who stood between two men at a critical moment. But only a spark flew over the footlights. In fact, the scene almost missed fire.

But at any rate, the play had arrived at something, and with the coming of the husband, wrapped in an overcoat and the lie that he had been pardoned, it proceeded to make up for lost time. The coward's overtures to his wife when he learned that she knew of his guilt and might testify against him were bad enough, but the charge that she was living with Temple and that he would bring this out at the trial was almost beyond human endurance, even with the footlights to keep off the mob. It was a relief to see Miss Bates's clenched fists descend upon him.

But that was not all. Through another letter that was dictated to the secretary she learned that he had stolen not for her, but for another woman whom he had been supporting. The audience hailed the Tenderloin allusions as true comedy. But a police whistle put a stop to any further revelations, and after the wife had enabled the fugitive to escape through a window a pistol shot announced that an end had been put to him.

Miss Bates flashed out brilliantly in the last act, and Mr. Howell Hansel played the despicable Granger so well that you could forgive him only after leaving the theatre. Mr. Charles Richman made Temple entirely trustworthy though a trifle hysterical, and Mr. John W. Cope, as confidential adviser, did his best to save him from matrimony and imprisonment. As Temple's interfering housekeeper, Miss Loretta Wells did all that could be expected of her, but the character needs reforming. Its Plymouth Rock conscience is not consistent.

"The Fighting Hope" is so well acted and it puts up such a good fight toward the end that it easily takes rank as the strongest play of the season. In fact, it gets a trifle too "strong."

The Widow

By Helen Rowland

DISCUSSES LOVE-MAKING AS A FINE ART.

HELEN ROWLAND.

"THEY are trying to frighten us again," declared the Widow, taking a seat at the little corner table in the Astor grill-room.

"Who is trying to frighten you?" demanded the Bachelor as he helped the waiter dispose of a purple parasol, a gilt chatelaine, a shopping bag, a lace coat, a bunch of violets and a feather boa.

"The—the authorities and things," explained the Widow. "They are talking of establishing a 'Course of Courtship' in the public schools. Just fancy throwing cold water on the divine fire like that!" and she waved her fork dramatically.

"Dreadful!" agreed the Bachelor. "But I don't think you need bother about it. Love-making, like poetry, is an instinct, and lovers, like poets, grow wild; they can't be cultivated. Courting is like cooking. You've got to be born with the knack. It's a gift of Providence as unaccountable and inexplicable as a straight nose or a good constitution. It's one of the things in which brains don't count and theory doesn't take the prizes; and all you need is—er—a little practice"——

"And if you're born with the knack," rejoined the widow, glancing up sidewise under her hat, "you can't help practising—I suppose.

"You ought to know," retorted the Bachelor promptly. "But if you aren't born with the knack," he continued hurriedly, "you can read Laura Jean Libbey and the Duchess and all the 'Guides to Lovemaking' that ever were printed without learning how to begin"——

"There isn't any reliable recipe for it," explained the Widow, "and you can only tell whether or not you have done it properly by the way it turns out."

"And the oftener you try it the better you do it," appended the Bachelor.

"And the less a man knows about letters," continued the Widow, "the more he seems to know about women; the less intelligence and character he has, the more he appears to get of feminine adoration."

"Oh, well"—the Bachelor stabbed an oyster thoughtfully—"the less a woman knows about the ologies, the more she seems to know about using her eyes and talking nonsense, the fewer talents she has, the better husband she gets. But I thought," he added, "that teaching men and women to understand one another was to be a regular part of the new curriculum."

"That's the saddest and—funniest part of it."

How can it be sad and funny at the same time?" demanded the Bachelor.

"Don't you see," explained the Widow, laying down her oyster fork, "how sad it will be for the man and how funny it will be for the other people?—when he wakes up?"

"When he—what?"

"Discovers how little he knows," explained the Widow. "No man ever finds out how little he knows about women until he has married one of them. There are just as many kinds of women as there are kinds of weather"——

"Or Yale locks," put in the Bachelor, "and every one of them is a different combination. But," he continued, "there ought to be some general rules"——

"There are," agreed the Widow, "just as there are four seasons, but you've got to have lived through the seasons before you can understand them, and to have lived with a woman before you can tell what—what's coming next. A Hottentot can read a description of a snow storm without knowing how it feels, and a man can read all that ever was written about women and not know enough to avoid asking his wife a question when her mouth is full of pins!"

"And a girl," broke in the Bachelor, "can read all that ever was written about men and not know enough to avoid hanging her husband's coat and vest upside down so that the things fall out of the pockets."

"Yes," finished the Widow emphatically, "one week of actual practice in love-making or matrimony is better than all the theories that could be invented by the most eminent board of education that ever existed.—— Why, what are you doing, Mr. Travers."

"Practising," returned the Bachelor, boldly holding tight to the Widow's hand under the table. "The oftener you try it, you know"——

"Anything more, sir?" interrupted the waiter, suddenly looming beside the table.

"There!" exclaimed the Widow, snatching her hand away with flaming cheeks. "He saw us."

"And he'll never believe," sighed the Bachelor pathetically, "that it was only a physiological demonstration of a psychological theory!"

The Million Dollar Kid

By R. W. Taylor

MANHATTANETTES

IN PROSE AND VERSE.

By Martin Green.

The Steam Drill Man.

UPON a ridge of grit and rock,
Where Nature's forces worked and died,
The city's growth spreads, block by block,
Impelled and greed race side by side.
The skyline changes day by day,
And men, aspiring, seem to sweep
Superna! force from out their way,
But, to build high, they must dig deep!

A quivering tripod set in slime,
Throbbing with force from a distant pump;
A hiss of air, a wealth of grime,
A creak of cars, bound for the dump,
A rat-a-tat of steel on stone,
A grinding, screaming, pounding smash,
A fog of steam, an exhaust groan,
A steady, nerve exciting crash.
The steam drill man puts in his blast
And sets his wires and waves his hand;
The dirt-stained Ginnies flee, aghast—
It is his time to take command.
Up from the dynamite scarred hole
They swarm in mud-bedaubed array;
The steam drill man, he takes a stroll
To watch things from across the way.
Giuseppe in the crowded street
His red flag waves, with strident shout:
"Hey! Back-a up, you! Make a beat!
Da blas! She come! Ho-ey! Look-a out!"
Bo-o-om!

The skyline changes day by day;
The steam drill man plays his big part;
The towers that brush the clouds away
Depend on him to get their start.

Observations.

IT makes the subway guard sore to hear you say: "Running a little slow this morning because there is a fog in the Subway, eh? Ha, ha, haw!"

It makes the bartender sore to hear you say: "Gee, you ought to be strong in the arms and back from shaking drinks all the time."

It makes the street-car conductor sore to hear you say: "I'd rather give this nickel to you, but I suppose I am giving it to the company."

What makes you sore when you hear it, gentle reader?

(P. S.—Answers reading "Your stuff in The Evening World," or similarly, will not be considered, because we beat you to it.)

Advice to Raw Youths.

By Hiram Hall.

LEAP YEAR proposals are flattering, but remember the old poem about needles and pins. If it begins to look like a mate in three moves, upset the board.

Marriage is a lottery—a lot o' responsibility. Bachelorhood, however, seems to be a rain check.

Let a girl know you feel jilted and she is often your keenest sympathizer. To a wholesome, intelligent woman there is nothing like rubbing it in.

Save your extravagances for "afterwards;" the pace is killing for the more dirigible angels.

Never stoop to count her fillings when she is yawning; it's time to go. Court plaster's no sign of a bite; there's a rule: A little plaster for the complexion's sake.

It's no errand of mercy to drag to light hairpins and sidecombs from sofa crevices.

The wiser the man the simpler the trick and the harder the fall.

When a girl swears she could die eating chocolate sodas it is timely to advise abstemiousness.

Twice told tales of love are worse than fresh candy in an old box.

A friend in weeds is often a friend with needs.

When a girl smiles before you've finished a force sometimes she's only wondering if she left any powder on her nose.

Pet names are all very well, but it's best to exhaust the French and German and use up some of the plantation conveniences before beginning on the straight New York.

It only suggests, anyway, that her right name is monotonous. Think how you would like to have some sport start calling your mother Jake or Billy.

In advertising for a wife always stipulate as follows: Bride to furnish minister, canopy and flower girls. Then sign yourself T. Beaumont Vanderquiff, or the like. It's nice to have the trimmings tally with the general color scheme.

If you can't possibly stand her singing any longer, have another date; don't say you're ill.

A Revelation of New York Society

THE YOUNGER SET

By Robert W. Chambers,
Author of "The Firing Line" and "A Fighting Chance."

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS.

Capt. Philip Selwyn, of an old New York family, has resigned from the army because his wife, Alixe, divorced him to marry Jack Ruthven, a cotillon leader. Returning to New York, Selwyn frequently meets the Ruthvens. Alixe still secretly loves him. Ruthven is luring young Gerald Erroll to gamble at his house. Selwyn begs Alixe to prevent this, for the sake of Gerald's sister, Eileen. Eileen is the ward of Selwyn's brother-in-law, Austin Gerard. Gerald, against Selwyn's advice, has been losing heavily gambling at Ruthven's house. Selwyn, worried over a doubtful land deal (proposed by Neergard, his business partner) goes to the home of his sister, Nina Gerard, where he and Lansing, his chum (known as "Boots"), dine with Eileen and the Gerard children. Eileen persuades Selwyn to outstay the others, for a chat with her.

CHAPTER IV.

(Continued.)

Mid-Lent.

Their light-hearted laughter mingled delightfully—fresh, free, uncontrolled, peal after peal. She sat huddled up like a schoolgirl, lovely head thrown back, her white hands clasping her knees; he, both feet squarely on the floor, leaned forward, his laughter echoing hers.

"What nonsense! What blessed nonsense you and I are talking!" she said, "but it has made me quite happy. Now you may go to your club and your mysterious man-talk"——

"I don't want to"——

"Oh, but you must!"—she was now dismissing him—"because, although I am convalescent, I am a little tired, and Nina's maid is waiting to tuck me in."

"So you send me away?"

"Send you"— She hesitated, delightfully confused in the reversal of roles—not quite convinced of this new power which, of itself, had seemed to invest her with authority over man. "Yes," she said, "I must send you away." And her heart beat a little faster in her uncertainty as to his obedience—then leaped in triumph as he rose with a reluctance perfectly visible.

"To-morrow," she said, "I am to drive for the first time. In the evening I may be permitted to go to the Grays' mid-Lent dance—but not to dance much. Will you be there? Didn't they ask you? I shall tell Suddy Gray what I think of him—I don't care whether it's for the younger set or not! Goodness me, aren't you as young as anybody! Well then! So we won't see each other to-morrow. And the day after that—oh, I wish I had my engagement list. Never mind, I will telephone you when I'm to be at home—or wherever I'm going to be. But it won't be anywhere in particular, because it's Lent, of course. Good night, Captain Selwyn; you've been very sweet to me, and I've enjoyed every single instant."

When he had gone, she rose, a trifle excited in the glow of abstract happiness, and walked erratically about, smiling to herself, touching and rearranging objects that caught her attention. Then an innocent instinct led her to the mirror, where she stood a moment looking back into the lovely reflected face with its disordered hair.

"After all," she said, "I'm not as aged as I pretended. I wonder if he is laughing at me now. But he was very, very nice to me—wherever he has gone in quest of that 'good time' and to talk his man-talk to other men"——

In a reverie she stood at the mirror considering her own flushed cheeks and brilliant eyes.

"What a curiously interesting man he is," she murmured naively. "I shall telephone him that I am not going to that mi-careme dance. Besides, Suddy Gray is a bore with the martyred smile he's been cultivating. As though a happy girl would dream of marrying anybody with all life before her to learn important things in! And that dreadful downy Scott Innis—trying to make me listen to him!—until I was ashamed to be alive! And Bradley Harmon—ugh!—and oh, that mushy widower, Percy Draymore, who got hold of my arm before I dreamed"——

She shuddered and turned back into the room, frowning and counting her slow steps across the floor.

"After all," she said, "their silliness may be their greatest mystery—but I don't include Capt. Selwyn," she added loyally; "he is far too intelligent to be like other men."

Yet, like other men, at that very moment Capt. Selwyn was playing the fizzing contents of a siphon upon the iced ingredients of a tall, thin glass which stood on a table in the Lenox Club.

The governors' room being deserted except by himself and Mr. Lansing, he continued the animated explanation of his delay in arriving.

"So I stayed," he said to Boots with an enthusiasm quite boyish, "and I had a perfectly bully time. She's just as clever as she can be—startling at moments. I never half appreciated her—she formerly appealed to me in a different way—a young girl knocking at the door of the world, and no mother or father to open for her and show her the gimcracks and the freaks and the side shows. Do you know, Boots, that some day that girl is going to marry somebody, and it worries me, knowing men as I do—unless you should think of"——

"Great James!" faltered Mr. Lansing, "are you turning into a schatschen? Are you planning to waddle through the world making matches for your friends? If you are, I'm quitting you right here."

"It's only because you are the decentest man I happen to know," said Selwyn, resentfully. "Probably she'd turn you down, any way. But"— and he brightened up, "I dare say she'll choose the best to be had; it's a pity though"——

"What's a pity?"

"That a charming, intellectual, sensitive, innocent girl like that should be turned over to a plain lump of a man."

"When you've finished your eulogy on our sex," said Lansing, "I'll walk home with you."

"Come on, then; I can talk while I walk; did you think I couldn't?"

And as they struck through the first cross street toward Lexington avenue: "It's a privilege for a fellow to know that sort of a girl—so many surprises in her—the charmingly unexpected and unsuspected!—the pretty flashes of wit, the naive egotism which is as amusing as it is harmless. I had no idea how complex she is. If you think you have the simple feminine on you hands, forget it, Boots!—for she's as evanescent as a hello-flash and as stunningly luminous as a searchlight. And here I've been doing the benevolent prig, bestowing society upon her as a sop doles out indigestible stuff to a kid, using a sort of guilty discrimination in the distribution."

"What on earth is all this?" demanded Lansing. "Are you perhaps non compos, dear friend?"

"I'm trying to tell you and explain to myself that little Miss Erroll is a rare and profoundly interesting specimen of a genus not usually too amusing," he replied with growing enthusiasm. "Of course, Holly Erroll was her father, and that accounts for something; and her mother seems to have been a wit as well as a beauty—which helps you to understand; but the brilliancy of the result—aged nineteen, mind you—is out of all proportion; cause and effect do not balance. • • • Why, Boots, an ordinary man—I mean an everyday fellow who dines and dances and does the harmlessly usual about town, dwindles to anaemic insignificance when compared to that young girl—even now when she's practically undeveloped—when her intelligence is like an uncut gem still in the matrix of inexperience"——

"Help!" said Boots feebly, attempting to bolt; but Selwyn hooked arms with him, laughing excitedly. In fact Lansing had not seen his friend in such excellent spirits for many, many months; and it made him exceedingly light-hearted, so that he presently began to chant the old service canticle:

"I have another, he's just as bad,
He almost drives me crazy"——

And arm in arm they swung into the dark avenue, singing "Barney Riley" in resonant undertones, while overhead the chilly little western stars looked down through pallid convolutions of moving clouds, and the wind in the gaunt avenue grew keener on the street corners.

"Cooler, followed by clearing," observed Boots in disgust. "Ugh; it's the limit, this nipping, howling hemisphere." And he turned up his overcoat collar.

"I prefer it to a hemisphere that smells like a cheap joss-stick," said Selwyn.

"After all, they're about alike," retorted Boots—"even to the ladrones of Broadstreet and the dattos of Wall. • • • And here's our bally bungalow now," he added, fumbling for his keys and whistling "taps" under his breath.

As the two men entered and started to ascend the stairs a door on the parlor floor opened and their landlady appeared, enveloped in a soiled crimson kimono and a false front which had slipped sideways.

"There's the Sultana," whispered Lansing, "and she's making sign-language at you. Wig-wag her, Phil. Oh!—good evening, Mrs. Greeve; did you wish to speak to me? Oh!—to Capt. Selwyn.

"If you please," said Mrs. Greeve, ominously, so Lansing continued upward. Selwyn descended. Mrs. Greeve waved him into the icy parlor, where he presently found her straightening her "front" with work-worn fingers.

"Captain Selwyn, I deemed it my duty to set up in order to inform you of certain special doin's," she said, haughtily.

"What 'doings'?" he inquired.

"Mr. Erroll's, sir. Last night he evidentially found difficulty with the stairs and I seen him asleep on the parlor sofa when I come down to answer the milkman, a-smokin' a cigar that wasn't lit, with his feet on the angelus."

"I'm very, very sorry, Mrs. Greeve," he said—"and so is Mr. Erroll. He and I had a little talk to-day, and I am sure that he will be more careful hereafter."

"There is cigar holes burned into the carpet," insisted Mrs. Greeve, "and a mercy we wasn't all insinuated in our beds; one window-pane broken and the gas a blue an' whistlin' streak with the curtins blowin' into it an' a strange cat on to that satin dosy-do."

"All of which," said Selwyn, "Mr. Erroll will make every possible amends for. He is very young, Mrs. Greeve, and very much ashamed. I am sure. So please don't make it too hard for him."

She stood, little slippered feet planted sturdily in the first position in dancing, fat, bare arms protruding from the kimono, her work-stained fingers linked together in front of her. With a soiled thumb she turned a ring on her third finger.

"I ain't a-goin' to be mean to nobody," she said; "my gentlemen is always refined, even if they do sometimes forget theirselves when young and sporty. Mr. Erroll is now a-bed, sir, and asleep like a cherub, Joe havin' been served three times with towels, extra. Would you be good enough to mention the bill to him in the morning?—the grocer bein' sniffy." And she handed the wadded and inky memorandum of damages to Selwyn, who pocketed it with a nod of assurance.

"There was," she added, following him to the door, "a lady here to see you twice, leavin' no name or intentions otherwise than business affairs of a pressin' nature."

"A—lady?" he repeated, halting short on the stairs.

"Young an' refined, allowin' for a automobile veil."

"She—she asked for me?" he repeated, astonished.

"Yes, sir. She wanted to see your rooms. But havin' no orders, Capt. Selwyn—although I must say she was that polite and ladylike, and," added Mrs. Greeve irrelevantly, "a art rocker come for you, too, and another for Mr. Lansing, which I placed in your respective settin' rooms."

"Oh," said Selwyn, laughing in relief, "it's all right, Mrs. Greeve. The lady who came is my sister, Mrs. Gerard; and whenever she comes you are to admit her whether or not I am here."

"She said she might come again," nodded Mrs. Greeve as he mounted the stairs; "am I to show her up any time she comes?"

"Certainly—thank you," he called back "and Mr. Gerard, too, if he calls."

He looked into Boots's room as he passed; that gentleman, in bedroom costume of peculiar exotic gorgeousness, sat stuffing a pipe with shag and poring over a mass of papers pertaining to the Westchester Air Line's property and prospective developments.

"Come in, Phil," he called out, "and look at the dinky chair somebody sent me!" But Selwyn shook his head.

"Come into my rooms when you're ready," he said, and closed the door again, smiling and turning away toward his own quarters.

Before he entered, however, he walked the length of the hall and cautiously tried the handle of Gerald's door. It yielded; he lighted a match and gazed at the sleeping boy where he lay very peacefully among his pillows. Then, without a sound, he reclosed the door and withdrew to his apartment.

(To Be Continued.)